

Letters to the Editor

STATINTL

"Ambassador to Israel"

Your editorial of May 30 regarding the Ambassador to Israel, Ogden Reid, startled me. You observed that "unless the Committee (on Foreign Relations) had been prepared to scrutinize minutely the particular qualifications of every nominee, career as well as political, and to apply a stricter standard than any used so far, there would have been little point in making an issue of this case."

I quite agree that the Senate has been lax in meeting its responsibilities under the advice and consent clause of the Constitution. But I can't agree that our responsibility is any less clear or binding because of this dereliction.

Now if you agree that American diplomacy should be managed by people who are qualified by experience and competence, then surely you must agree that the Senate at some point must begin to challenge the qualifications of people who, like Mr. Reid, have neither experience nor demonstrated competence in this field.

Further along in your editorial, you caution that "because so many Americans are interested in Israel, the role of the American Ambassador takes on unusual importance."

I agree and assume you would agree that the explosive nature of Israel's problems with her neighbors gives this embassy still greater importance.

Since these are points we can agree on, I do not understand why we cannot agree, as well, on the need to break with the easy ways of the past and come to terms with our responsibilities.

The reason for "making an issue of this case" is that, obviously, a start must be made somewhere. Just a little more than three months ago I wrote to the Secretary of State and said that henceforth the Committee would examine more closely the qualifications of ambassadorial nominees. Mr. Reid's nomination happened to coincide with this publicly stated intention.

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